

MS. PINKERTON'S QUESTIONS.

1. Are citta, cetasika and rūpa 'vibrations'?

It depends on what one means by vibration. Is it not clearer just to say that conditioned realities arise and then fall away? If we use the word vibration, different people have different ideas about what it is. One may have a mental picture of something which moves, but stays nevertheless. Mental pictures do not help very much. Knowing a characteristic of a reality when it appears, like hardness now, that is the way to have more understanding. Many different conditions condition this moment of hardness now: body-sense (which is also conditioned: by kamma), a tangible object, the cetasika 'contact' which 'contacts the object' so that the citta it accompanies can experience that object. And the experience of hardness is vipāka, result of kamma. The experience of hardness is dependent on many different factors which condition it. It arises at a particular moment and it has to fall away again. And now your second question about nibbāna.

2. The difference between nibbāna which is unconditioned nāma and citta. Is nibbāna a state, a process, what is nibbanic bliss, is it relief?

If nibbāna would be citta, it would arise because of conditions and then fall away again. However, nibbāna is unconditioned, it does not arise and it does not fall away. If we have more understanding of conditioned realities, only then, can we better understand what nibbāna is. No use to speculate about it. Because of ignorance and craving we have to be born again and again and receive sense-impressions. There is seeing now, it arises and then falls away. Why does there have to be seeing again and again? Because we are not free from birth. It may seem appealing to live, but actually we are not free, we are slaves of all the objects which are experienced, again and again. Everything which arises and falls away is dukkha, it is not true peace, no refuge. Nibbāna is relief in the sense of not dukkha, of peace. But that is not a feeling of relief. Nibbāna is not citta, not cetasika, because it is unconditioned. But it is dhamma, it is reality. It can be the object of citta, of lokut-tara citta.

When we say that we have a feeling of relief, free from suffering it is merely a thought, and it has nothing to do with nibbāna. Only those who have developed paññā to such a high degree that enlightenment can be attained know what nibbāna is. This kind of paññā is the paññā which knows the present reality as it is, and it has to be cultivated by being aware of the conditioned realities which appear right now. Not by speculation about nibbāna.

As to your remark about 'Abhidhammatha Sangāha', p. 326, about all kinds of consciousness, that they are 'one' since they have the characteristic of awareness, it is merely a classification, telling us that they have in common that they cognize an object. And then: Nibbāna is 'one' since it possesses the characteristic of peacefulness, this 'one' merely refers to ^(the way of) classification, and instead of peacefulness it is better to say: peace, in order to indicate that it is not a mental state. There are many ways to classify realities. There is no more behind this 'one' than indicating that it is different from the many cittas or cetasikas or rupas.

Nibbāna is not magga-citta, but magga-citta experiences nibbāna. The magga-citta destroys defilements, in different stages. As to kamma, for the arahat there is no more kamma which can produce rebirth, no more conditions.

3. What are intention, attention, interest. Is stopping aversion intention?

When there are conditions for kusala citta there is no aversion at that moment. There are many kinds of cetasikas accompanying kusala citta and each of them plays their part, in assisting the kusala citta. There is not only kusala cetanā (intention) but also other ^(Cetasikas, such as) alobhā, non-attachment and adosa, non-aversion. What we call 'attention' in conventional ^{language} is different from the cetasika manasikāra which accompanies every citta and which 'drives' the other cetasikas (and citta) towards the object which is experienced at that moment. It is sati which 'remembers' kusala, is not-forgetful and does not waste the opportunity for kusala. When we think of attention, we may mean the reality of sati. As to interest, pīti, this arises only when the accompanying feeling is pleasant.

You are wondering what javana has to do with intention and attention. The kusala cittas (or akusala cittas) perform the function of javana, seven moments of 'running through the object'. In the case of kusala cittas there is 'wise attention' to the object. This does not refer to only one cetasika, to manasikāra, but to the preceding manodvārāvajjana-citta and to what follows: the kusala cittas. Citta and cetasikas all work together so that there is wise attention. It occurs because of wholesome accumulations.

4. Is analysing one's cittas thinking or sati?

It depends on the moment. I think we do a lot of thinking. Then we know concepts, not realities. ————— We think

of our dosa and we want to get rid of it, we do not like the accompanying unpleasant feeling. But is there knowledge of the characteristic of dosa, when it appears? That is a different matter. When there is non-forgetfulness of realities, sati is aware of dosa so that eventually it can be known as only a conditioned reality. This 'only' is important. Only a nāma, not self, not my dosa.

Thinking thinks a story, sati is mindful of what appears now.

5. If citta arises and falls away so rapidly, how can one become aware of it?

Is there seeing now? That characteristic appears, it is different from thinking. When there is a citta with mindfulness which is aware of seeing, the seeing has fallen away, since there cannot be mindfulness and seeing at the same time. However, we can still say: sati is aware of the 'present moment', since seeing has only just fallen away. That characteristic 'appears' to the sati. Paññā can only develop very gradually. We may wonder how the arising and falling away of nāma and rūpa can ever be realized. Paññā can. Paññā is paññā and now while we are thinking how can that be, we have no idea what paññā can, when it has been developed, not in one day. Paññā needs the right conditions: listening, considering, testing the meaning of what one has heard.

You say that a thought seems to stay for a while, it is the result of many cittas which condition the next and the next.

It is not different from the other cittas. Each citta conditions the next one but it falls away. So also with thinking. We take thinking for self because of accumulated wrong view. The ariyan can also think, but realizes that thinking is not self.

6. The characteristic of sound: loudness or softness, harsh or shrill.

Sound is just what appears through ears. We can say: loudness, or different degrees of loudness. Hearing hears it all but it does not think of the quality of the sound. Is ringing in one's ears a sound?

If one thinks of one's ears or that kind of ringing it is thinking again. But is there not just sound, no matter where it comes from?

7. What kind of citta can influence one's physical condition, is there sati which can improve it?

It is true that nāma can condition rūpa. Kusala is also good for the body. It is not self who can achieve this. Kusala citta arises only when there are the right conditions, not because of a self who 'wills' it. Don't we take the will often for self? It may seem that we can decide: now there should be kusala but this is not so, it is all dependent on conditions. You mentioned that when

your relatives were with you and you could help them, akusala cittas stayed away. It is true, when we do not think of ourselves and help others there are kusala cittas, and when there is kusala citta there cannot be akusala citta at the same time. But there are many, many moments of clinging, even subtle clinging in between. We usually do not know there is clinging when the lobha-mūla-citta is accompanied by upekkhā, and there are many, many. After seeing, after hearing, there is usually clinging, even if we do not feel glad. We want to see, we want to hear, we want to live. We like to see others. We help them and then there is kusala citta, but is there not attachment, arising very closely after the kusala cittas? We want to be liked by others, or simply: we like to think of persons. Is thinking not most of the time done by akusala cittas? When there is no dāna, when we do not observe sila, or study Dhamma, cultivate mettā or are aware of nama or rupa, the thinking is done by akusala cittas. We like to look at a teacup. When we notice a teacup, is there not usually clinging, even if we are not feeling glad? We like to notice all the familiar things around us, is that not clinging? It is useful also to know the more subtle forms of clinging, otherwise we make ourselves believe that ^{there} can be kusala for a long time and that akusala quits for a while. Lobha never takes a rest, it always finds an object since we have accumulated it so much. Lobha is easy. Sati is not easy, like lobha, but it can be accumulated so that sati can become one's nature. It is good to understand why sati is difficult and not easy like lobha. Then we understand better how all these qualities are conditioned. Neither kusala citta nor akusala are ego, they are anattā. The development of understanding is not a matter of trying to suppress akusala, but ^(can understand) understanding it as only a conditioned reality. Then we will be less obsessed by it, or preoccupied with it. It is understanding which matters.

8. Is it paññā or citta which sees the arising and falling away of realities?

Paññā has the function of understanding, and it accompanies ^{these} citta and other cetasikas, and are conditioned by the accompanying paññā. Paññā penetrates to the characteristic of reality for sure.

With Metta,

Nina van Gorkom.